



# How to Control the Spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a new, serious, pneumonia-like illness that may be caused by a virus. Patients with SARS can spread the illness to others in their homes and to health care workers caring for them. No one knows how long someone with SARS can spread the disease, so it is important that SARS patients and members of their household follow the steps below to help stop the spread of the illness.

- **Limit contact with others.** Patients with SARS should stay home and not go to work, school, day-care, or other public places until ten days after their temperature has returned to normal (no fever) and they no longer have a cough. During this time, a house with a SARS patient should not have visitors.
- **Wash your hands often.** Carefully and frequently wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub, particularly after taking care of the patient or coming in contact with the patient's body fluids (handling used tissues, surgical masks, changing diapers, etc.) Go to this website for more details on hand washing: [www.cdc.gov/handhygiene](http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene)
- **Use gloves around body fluids.** Use disposable gloves when you come in contact with the body fluids of a SARS patient. Immediately after contact with the patient's body fluids, take off the gloves and throw them away. Wash or clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. Do not wash or reuse gloves.
- **Cover your mouth.** Patients with SARS should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. To prevent spreading the illness, a SARS patient should wear a surgical mask when in contact with anyone who is not sick. When a SARS patient can't wear a surgical mask, household members and visitors should wear surgical masks when in close contact with the patient.
- **Do not share personal items.** Don't share eating utensils, towels, or bedding with someone who has SARS, although these items can be used after washing with regular soap and hot water.
- **Clean infected areas.** Any surfaces soiled by the body fluids of a patient should be cleaned with a household disinfectant according to the instructions on the product label. Wear gloves while cleaning.
- **Discard used items.** Throw out tissues, surgical masks and other disposable items used by a SARS patient with other household trash.
- **Watch for symptoms in family and close contacts.** If a household member or other close contact of a SARS patient gets sick with a fever, cough, or has trouble breathing, they should see their health care provider as soon as possible. Call the provider first to tell them that there has been contact with a SARS patient.
- **Tips for household members and close contacts.** Household members or other close contacts that get sick with a fever, cough, or have trouble breathing should follow the same steps listed above for SARS patients. Household members or other close contacts of SARS patients do not need to limit their activities outside the home, if they do not have a fever, cough or trouble breathing.